

Sketch

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Article 3

Stigma

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Abstract

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Martha wanted to open the window and breathe the fresh air outside. She wanted to run from the room and never think of it again. What good can I do here, she wondered. It's too late now to do anything but watch his skin turn yellow—gradually at first, in small blotches, then a faster decay until there is no longer a man, but only a smell.

Martha closed her eyes. I want to remember him in the days before the smell. The days of sunshine and clean air, and health, and loud laughter, and joy. Martha rubbed her hands together. She bit her lip and sighed. How much longer, she thought. How much more of this agony?

The old man moaned in his sleep. Martha jumped. She stared at his neck. The skin was completely yellow. It wouldn't be much longer.

—Janet Dunlevy, *Sci. Jr.*